

Mark Chapter 13

Verses 1-37: This is called the Olivet Discourse, having been delivered on the Mount of Olives.

This great sermon by Jesus is commonly known as the Olivet Discourse because Jesus delivered it on the Mt. of Olives just east of the temple across the Kidron Valley. Jesus' prediction of the coming destruction of the temple prompted a question from the disciples about the character of the end times. The remainder of the passage (verses 5-37), is His response to their question as He describes His second coming at the end of the present age.

Mark 13:1 "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]!"

“What manner of stone and what buildings are here!” (See note on Matt. 24:1). This unidentified disciple was admiring the magnificence and beauty of the temple and the surrounding buildings and was encouraging a like response from Jesus. It is likely that he could not comprehend how such an awesome structure could be left “desolate” (Matt. 23:38).

The disciple refers to the huge stones of the magnificent temple begun in 20 B.C. under Herod the Great and completed some 84 years later.

Mark 13:2 "And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

“Jesus ... said”: In response to the disciple's admiration, Jesus again predicted that the temple would be destroyed. About 40 years later in 70 A.D., the Romans ransacked Jerusalem, killed a million Jews, and demolished the temple.

“Not be left one stone”: The only stones left undisturbed were huge foundation stones that were not actually a part of the temple edifice but formed footings for the retaining wall under the entire temple mount. These can be viewed today in the “Rabbi's Tunnel” which runs north and south along the western wall.

It is a portion of the western side of the retaining wall that today is called the Wailing Wall. More of that retaining wall, including the steps used to ascend and descend from the temple mount, has also been uncovered on the southern side.

This was the prediction of the destruction of the temple. This same destruction was spoken of (in chapter 21) of Luke. We know that Jesus' prediction did come true just a few years later, in fact, less than forty years later.

Mark 13:3 "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,"

“The Mount of Olives” (see note on 11:1), is overlooking the old city of Jerusalem. We see here, Peter, James, and John, the three He usually took aside with Him, and in this case one more, Andrew. Andrew was believed to be the first of the disciples which was called. So many times, it seemed Jesus talked to this group separately from the people and separately from the other disciples.

“Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately”: These 4 disciples were asking on behalf of all the 12.

It appears Jesus had every confidence in these and felt as if He could share things with these that perhaps, might not be well accepted by the others. When Jesus foretold of the destruction of the temple, it was to this select few.

Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what [shall be] the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"

In verse 4, the question was different from the first question. They were saying when would the temple be destroyed? In the second question, they were looking for physical evidence to set the time by. We can probably see by these questions that they associated the destruction of the temple with the end of the world, at least the end of their world.

The disciples were speculating that Jesus would imminently usher in the kingdom, so they asked a twofold question:

- (1) When would the temple be destroyed and the kingdom begin and
- (2) What event would herald the beginning of the kingdom?

“When shall these things be?” “When” implies immediacy. The disciples thought that Jesus was about to usher in the kingdom of God at any time (Luke 19:11), at least by the end of the Passover season. “These things” refers to the desolation and destruction of the temple (Matt. 23:38; 24:2).

“The sign”: The disciples probably expected some miraculous occurrence, such as complete darkness, brilliant light, or an angel from heaven, to announce the coming millennial kingdom (see note on Matt. 24:3). All of those things will occur at that time (see notes on verses 24-27).

Mark 13:5 "And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any [man] deceive you:"

“Take heed”: This Greek word was often used as it is here with the idea of “keep your eyes open” or “beware”.

This was a warning specifically to Peter, who would be afraid and deceived in just a few days to the extent that he would even deny Jesus. It also, was a warning for all of us, as well, not to be deceived. Never in the history of mankind has there been an age when it was easier to be deceived than right now. *The only way not to be deceived is to know the whole truth.*

The Bible contains the only whole, real truth. We must check everything out to see what Jesus had to say about it. He is the Truth. We are also, told to try the spirits and see whether they be of God before we believe.

1 John 4:1-3 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:" "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

You see, we must never doubt that the very Son of God (The Savior, The Anointed One), took on the flesh of man and dwelt among us. Jesus is God the Son. That is what we must believe. Do not let people convince you that Jesus was a man. Jesus was in the body of a man, but He, in fact, was God the Son inside that house (the body), that He dwelt in here on the earth.

Mark 13:6 "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am [Christ]; and shall deceive many."

"I am Christ": Many false prophets will come forward claiming to be messiahs and deliverers, offering themselves as the solution to the world's problems. Some will even claim to be Christ Himself. The number of false christ's will increase as the end nears (Matt. 24:23-24).

When I was a child, there was a man going through the country claiming to be Jesus. Many people in our community went to see him. Even now, there are a number of people throughout the world proclaiming to be Jesus. Don't be deceived by these people.

When Jesus returns, you will see Him in the eastern sky. In the 24th chapter of Matthew, we read a similar statement.

Mark 13:7 "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for [such things] must needs be; but the end [shall] not [be] yet."

"The end": The consummation of the present age (see note on Matt. 24:6).

In this statement, there is a looking down through all ages of time until the return of the Lord. There really will never be peace on the earth until the King of Peace, Jesus Christ, comes back to earth and sets up His Kingdom. There is a war raging somewhere on the globe now and has been ever since Jesus made this statement.

You may get it calmed down one place, but it breaks out in another. The Lord expects us to have peace in the midst of the storm. He warns us not to be overwhelmed with fear, even of war, but to go on spreading the gospel even in the midst of all the turmoil. There is such a threat of a nuclear war now that I believe it is the cause of many young people taking drugs and alcohol.

The use of drugs and alcohol is a running from the reality of the world around us. Most young people do not believe that they will have a future. The uncertainty of the conditions on the earth

would be too much to bear, if we didn't know Jesus. The difference in those lost and the Christians basically, is Christians know there is a future. We have something to look forward to.

There is a knowing that all is well with a Christian. We do not count this earth as our home. Our home is in heaven. We are longing for the day when we go home to be with our Lord, and we have no fear of what man can do to us. At the worst, he can just hurry our going home.

Mark 13:8 "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these [are] the beginnings of sorrows."

“Beginnings of sorrows”: Also referred to as “birth pangs” in some versions of the bible meaning the Lord was referring to the pain a woman experience in childbirth. Birth pains signal the end of pregnancy, they are infrequent at first and gradually increase just before the child is born.

Likewise, the sign of (verses 6-8), will be infrequent, relatively speaking, in the beginning and will escalate to massive and tragic proportions just prior to Christ’s second coming. (1 Thess. 5:3; see note on Matt. 24:8).

This terrible earthquake in Russia is similar to what this is speaking of. India, and parts of Africa, has had such devastating famine now that it is beyond our comprehension. All of (verse 8), indicates to me, that we are already in this time of sorrow. People's hearts are failing for the things that are coming upon the earth.

Luke 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

These warnings from the Lord are to prepare us. He lets us know that times will be rough just before the Lord returns to earth. Men will cry peace, but there will be no peace. Calamities, wars, and natural disasters come to cause people to repent.

Christians should use the opportunity to try to win people to the Lord. We cannot stop the disaster, but we can help those devastated by the disaster find a better way.

Mark 13:9 "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."

“Councils”: The Greek work is literally “Sanhedrin’s.”: These were local, Jewish courts attached to the synagogues which tried charges of heresy and normal infractions of the law.

The historian Josephus says that each city’s court was composed of 7 judges (Antiquities, 4.8.14), and the Misnah records that there were 23 judges in every city with more than 100 Jewish men (“Sanhedrin” 1.6). These “courts” were like smaller versions of the great Sanhedrin that convened in Jerusalem (see note on Matt. 26:59).

“Beaten”: These local courts usually administered 39 stripes so as not to violate (Deut. 25:2-3). The recipient of the punishment was stripped bare to the waist. He received 13 lashings to his chest and 26 to his back (see note on 2 Cor. 11:24).

“Synagogues”: The “synagogues” were the places for Jewish assembly and worship. When the “courts” convened, they typically met in the “synagogue.”

“Take heed: Throughout this chapter Jesus consistently stresses, not just coming events, but the proper response and life-style of His disciples. They ought always to live in the light of His coming.

This particular statement here, was directed to the disciples. Certainly, we know that all of these things did happen to them. This was to prepare them when these things happened. My own personal belief is that the true believers of Jesus Christ will suffer persecution in our time as well.

Even now, if you try to live a holy, blameless life before the Lord, the non-religious people will ridicule you and cause you trouble in the flesh. In our society today, few want to face persecution for the Lord and His Word. Compromise is everywhere. The flesh of man is at enmity with God. It is easier to just give in than to stand firm in God.

Mark 13:10 "And the gospel must first be published among all nations."

“First be published among all nations”: Before the end (see note on verse 7), there will be a worldwide proclamation of the gospel. This may even refer to the occasion when an angel will supernaturally proclaim the gospel throughout the world before God pours out His judgment at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 14:6-8; see note on Matt. 24:14).

“Published” here means simply “proclaimed” by whatever means.

By television and satellite this has been fulfilled. The good news of the Lord Jesus Christ has now been proclaimed throughout the world, so one more thing has happened that must happen before the return of the Lord.

Mark 13:11 "But when they shall lead [you], and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

“Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak”: Although the persecution will be terrifying, Christians are not to be anxious in anticipation of those events.

“For it is not ye that speak”: Rather than being fearful, believers can remain calm and depend on the Holy Spirit, who will give them the appropriate and effective words to say in defense of their faith in Christ (see note on Luke 12:11).

We see here, a continuation of verse 9. This was a prophetic word for the disciples and for us, also. I believe that this perhaps, is an expansion on preaching the gospel to all nations, as well. You see, the Lord has a message for this hour, as well as then. I believe the Lord would have His ministers bringing His Words that He puts into their hearts and mouths.

All of the planning in the world to prepare a message for a given group is not half as effective as allowing the Lord to speak through you. The Lord wants obedient ministers who are willing to be open vessels to be used by Him.

One of the hardest things for people of our day to do (whether they are ministers or just Christians), is to allow Jesus to be Lord of our lives, as well as our Savior. We see in the last sentence of (verse 11), it is not us speaking, it is the Holy Ghost within us speaking, if we make Jesus our Lord. Make Jesus Lord of your life today.

Mark Chapter 13 Questions

1. What did the disciple bring to the Lord's attention as He left the temple?
2. What was the temple the permanent home of?
3. Who had built the temple?
4. What did Jesus say about the stones of the temple?
5. About how many years later was the temple destroyed?
6. Who went to the Mount of Olives this time with Jesus?
7. What did they ask Jesus when they got Him alone?
8. What does the Mount of Olives overlook?
9. Why possibly, did Jesus speak more openly to these four disciples than the others?
10. What were these disciples looking for to set the time by?
11. What was the first warning Jesus gave them?
12. How is the only way you and I can keep from being deceived?
13. In 1 John 4:1, we are told to do what to see if someone is of God?
14. What should we be very careful not to be convinced of?
15. Those who come in His name proclaim to be whom?

16. Where will we see Jesus when He returns to earth?
17. We are warned not to be troubled about _____ and rumors of _____.
18. When will there be peace upon the earth?
19. Where are we expected to have personal peace?
20. What does the author believe the abuse of drugs and alcohol is?
21. At the very worst, what can the enemy of a Christian do to them?
22. Describe what is taking place on the earth at the beginning of sorrows.
23. What does Luke 21:26 tell us about fear?
24. Name three things that come to cause people to repent.
25. Who was Jesus speaking specifically to in verse 9, when He said you will be brought before kings?
26. If you try to live holy before your Lord, who will ridicule you?
27. Where shall the gospel be preached before the end?
28. What two messages do we see in verse 11 about letting the Holy Ghost speak through you?
29. What is the most effective sermon?
30. What should we allow Jesus to be to us, besides our Savior?